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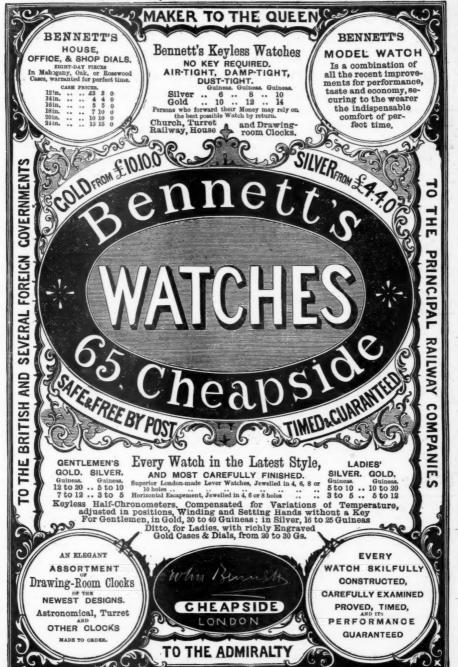
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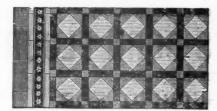
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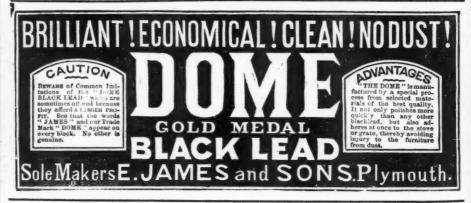
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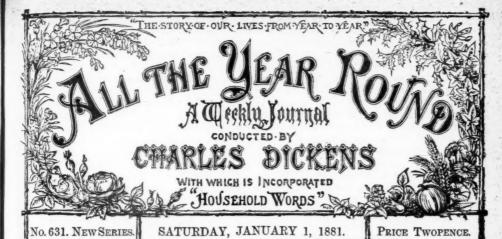
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CHAPTER XXIII. "AND COME AGEN, BE IT BY DAY OR NIGHT."

THE next three days passed somewhat slowly at South Hill. Unselfish as Madoline was, even her delight in Daphne's engagement could not altogether compensate for Gerald's absence. Life without him hung heavily; she missed him at all those accustomed hours which they had spent together. In the bright noon-tide, when he rode over fresh and full of vivacity after a late breakfast; in the afternoon dusk, when they had been wont to waste time so pleasantly beside the low wood fire; in the evening; always. He had been away for three days, and she had received only one shabby little letter — just a few feeble sentences, explaining that he had been obliged to run up to London, at an hour's notice, to see his lawyers upon some dry-asdust business relating to his Stock Exchange investments. He hoped to settle it all speedily, and come back to Warwickshire. The letter gave her very little comfort.

"I am afraid he is being worried," she said to Daphne, after she had read this brief communication two or three times over. "It is not like one of his letters."

The week after the ball began with one of those dull Sundays which come down upon country life like an atmosphere of gloom, and seem to blot out all the pleasantness of creation; a drizzling Scotch-misty Sabbath, painfully suggestive of Glasgow and the Free Kirk. Madoline and Daphne walked to church, water-proofed to the eyes, and assisted sadly at its rights."

of the last divine the last

a damp service; the whole congregation smelling of mackintoshes, the drip drip of umbrellas on the encaustic pavement audible in the pauses of the Liturgy. It was a rule at South Hill that horses and coachmen should rest on the seventh day, save under direst pressure, and neither of the sisters objected to a wet walk. Edgar met them at church, having tramped over through mud and rain, much to the disgust of his mother, who deemed that to be absent from one's own parish church on a Sunday morning was a social misde-meanour, not to be atoned for by the most fervent worship in a strange tabernacle. He joined Lina and her sister in the porch, and walked home with them by moist fields and a swollen Avon, whose fringe of willows never looked more funereal than on this dull wintry noon-tide, when the scant bare shoots stood straight up against a sky of level grey.

"Any news from Goring ?" asked Edgar, by way of making himself agreeable.

"Not since I saw you last. I fancy he must be very busy. He is usually such a good correspondent."

"Busy!" cried Edgar, laughing heartily at the idea. "What can he have to be busy about—unless it's the fit of a new suit of clothes, or some original idea in shooting-boots which he wants carried out, or the choice of a new horse; but, for that matter, I believe he doesn't seriously care what he rides. Busy, indeed! He can't know what work means. His bread was buttered for him on both sides before he was born."

"Isn't that rather a juvenile notion of yours, Edgar?" asked Madoline. "I believe the richest people are often the busiest. Property has its duties as well as its rights."

"No doubt. But a rich man can always take the rights for his own share, and pay somebody else to perform the duties," answered Edgar shrewdly. "And I should think Goring was about the last man to let his property be a source of care to him."

"In this instance I am afraid he is being worried about it," said Lina decisively; and with a look which seemed to say, "Nobody has any right to have an opinion about my lover."

The day was a long one, even with the assistance of Edgar in the task of getting through it. Daphne, considerably sobered by her engagement, behaved irreproachably all the afternoon and evening, but she stifled a good many yawns, until the effort made her eyes water.

Her father had been unusually kind to her since the announcement of her betrothal. All his anxieties about her, and it had been the habit of his mind to regard her as a source of trouble and difficulty, or even of future woe, were now set at rest. Married in the early bloom of her girlhood to such a man as Edgar, all her life to come would be so fenced round and protected, so sheltered and guarded by love and honour, that perversity itself could scarce go astray.

"Daphne's mother was spoiled before I married her," he told himself, remembering the misery of his second marriage. "If I had won her before her heart was corrupted our lives might have been different."

It seemed to him, looking at the matter soberly, that there could be no better alliance for his younger daughter than this with Edgar Turchill. He had seen them together continually, in a companinability which seemed full of pleasure for both: boating together, at lawn-tennis, at billiards, sympathising, as it seemed to him from his superficial point of view, in every thought and feeling: It never occurred to him that this was a mere surface sympathy, and that the hidden deeps of Daphne's mind and soulwere far beyond the plummetline of Edgar's sympathy or comprehension. Sir Vernon had made up his mind that his younger daughter was a frivolous butterfly-being, who needed only frivolous pleasures and girlish amusements to make her happy.

Everybody, or almost everybody, approved of Daphne's engagement. It was pleasant to the girl to live for a little while in an atmosphere of praise. Even Aunt Rhoda; upon whose being Daphne had exercised the kind of influence which some people feel when there is a cat in the troom; even Aunt Rhoda professed herself

delighted. She came over between the showers and the church services upon this particular Sunday, on purpose to tell Daphne how very heartily she approved of her conduct.

"You have acted wisely for once in your life," she said; "I hope it is the beginning of many wise acts. I suppose you will be married at the same time as Lina. The double wedding will have a very brilliant effect, and will save your father ever so much trouble and expense."

"Oh, no; I should not like that," cried Daphne hurriedly.

"You wouldn't like a double wedding!" ejaculated Mrs. Ferrers indignantly. "Why, what a vain, arrogant little person you must be. I suppose you fancy your own importance would be lessened if you were married at the same time as your elder

sister?" "No, no, aunt; indeed, it is not that. I am quite content to seem of no account beside Lina. 'I love her far too dearly to envy her superiority. But—if—when I am married I should like it to be very quietly-no people looking on-no fussno fine gowns. When my father and Edgar have made up their minds that the proper time has come, I should like just to walk into my uncle's church early some morning, with papa and Lina, and for Edgar to meet us there, just as quietly as if we were poor people, and for no one to be told anything about it."

"What a romantic school-girlish notion," said Mrs. Ferrers contemptuously, "Such a marriage would be a discredit to your family; and I should think it most unlikely my brother would ever give his consent to such a hole-and-corner way of doing things."

The one person at South Hill who absolutely refused to smile upon Daphne's engagement was Madoline's faithful Mowser. That devoted female received the announcement with shrugs, and ominous shakings of a head which carried itself as if it were the living temple of wisdom, and in a manner incomplete without that helmet of Minerva which obviously of right belonged to it.

"You don't seem as pleased as the rest of us at the notion of this second marriage," said good-tempered Mrs. Spicer, house-keeper and cook, to whom "the family" was the central point of the universe; sun, moon, and stars, earth and ocean, and all the rest of mankind, being merely so much furniture created to make "the family" comfortable.

"I hear and see and say nothing," answered Mowser, as oracular in most of her utterances as Friar Bacon's brazen head. "Time will show."

"Well, all I can say is," said Jinman, "that our Miss Daphne is an uncommon pretty girl, and deserves a good husband. She has just that spice of devilry in her which I like in a woman. Your eventempered girls are too insipid for my taste."

"I suppose you would have admired the spice of devilry in Miss Daphne's mar," retorted Mowser venomously, "which made

her run away from her husband."

"No, Mrs. Mowser; I draw the line at that. A man may want to get rid of his wife, but he don't like her to take the initial"—Mr. Jinman meant initiative—
"and bolt. A spice of devilry is all very well, but one doesn't want the entire animal. I like a shake of the grater in my negus, but I don't desire the whole nutmeg. But I do think that it's a low-minded thing to cast up Miss Daphne's mar every time the young lady's talked about. Every tub must stand on its own bottom."

"Well, Mr. Jinman," said Mowser, "all I hope is that Miss Daphne will carry through her engagement now she's made it. She's welcome to her own sweetheart, as far as I am concerned, so long as she doesn't hanker after other people's."

The phrase ended vaguely, and neither Mr. Jinman, nor Mrs. Spicer, nor the coachman, who had dropped in to tea and toast and a poached egg or two, in the housekeeper's room, had any clear idea of what Mowser meant, except that it was something ill-natured. On that point there was no room for doubt.

Another week wore on, the second after the ball, and Gerald Goring had not yet returned. He wrote every other day, telling Madoline all he had been doing; the picture-galleries and theatres he had visited, the clubs at which he had dined; yet in all these letter of his, affectionate as they were, there was a tone which sustained in Lina's mind the idea that her lover was in some way troubled or worried. The few phrases which gave rise to this impression were of the vaguest; she hardly knew how or why the notion had entered her mind, but it was there, and remained there, and it increased her anxiety for his return to an almost painful degree. While she was expecting him daily and hourly, a much longer letter arrived, which on the first reading almost broke her heart.

"MY DEAR ONE,—I write in tremendous excitement and flurry of mind to tell you something which I fear may displease you; yet at the very beginning I will disarm your wrath by saying that if you put a veto upon this intention of mine it shall be instantly abandoned. Subject to this, dear love, I am going, in hot haste, to Canada. Don't be startled, Lina. It is no more nowadays than going to Scotland. Men I know go across for the salmon-fishing every autumn, and are absent so short a time that their friends hardly miss them from

the beaten tracks at home.

"And now I will tell you what has put this Canadian idea into my head. I have for some time been feeling a little below par; mopish, lymphatic, disinclined for exertion of any kind. My holiday in the Orkneys was a dolce far niente business, which did me no real good. I went the other day to a famous doctor in Cavendish Square, a man who puts our prime ministers on their legs when they are inclined to drop, like tired cab-horses, under the burden of the public weal. He ausculted me carefully, found me sound in wind and limb, but nerves and muscles alike in need of bracing. 'You want change of scene and occupation,' he said, 'and a climate that will make you exert yourself. Go to Vienna and skate.' I daresay this would have been good advice for a man who had never seen Vienna; but, as I know that brilliant capital by heart, I rejected it. 'Please yourself,' said my physician, pocketing his fee; 'but I recommend complete change and the hardest climate you can bear.' do not feel sure that I intended to take his advice, or should have thought any more about it; but, I happened to meet Lord Loftus Berwick, the Duke of Banburgh's youngest son, and an old Eton chum of mine, in the smoking-room at the Reform that very evening, and he told me he was just off to Canada, dilating enthusiastically upon the delights of that wintry region, the various sports congenial to the month of February. He goes viâ New York, Delaware and Hudson Railway to Montreal, thence to Quebec, and from Quebec by the intercolonial railway to Rimouski, where he is to charter a small schooner and cross the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Natashquau River, which river belongs to two particular friends of his, both distinguished actors, and men of unbounded popularity on each side of the Atlantic. Here Loftus proposes to hunt cariboo, moose, elk, and I don't know what else. But before he

puts on his snow-shoes, loads his sledges, and harnesses his dogs for those happy hunting-grounds, he is going to revel in the more civilised and sophisticated pleasures of a Canadian winter, curlingclubs, sleigh-rides around the mountain at Montreal, toboggining at the Falls of Montmorenci, near Quebec, and so on. Just the thing for me, thought I, a hard climate, only about eight days'voyage, if my dearest did not object to my being away from my natural place at her feet for about five or six weeks. At my hinting a wish to accompany him, Loftus became still more enthusiastic, and was eager to have the whole thing settled that moment. And now, love, it is for you to decide. I think the run would do me good; but perish the thought of benefit to me, if it must be bought at the price of pain to you. Loftus is going in the Cunard, which leaves Liverpool the day after to-morrow. Telegraph your wishes, and be assured beforehand of obedience from your devoted slave, GERALD GORING."

Madoline's first thoughts were of the pain of being parted from her lover, whose presence had for so long been the sunshine of her days, and so much a part of her life that she seemed scarcely to live while he was away from her. Existence was reduced to a mere mechanical moving about, and doing duties which had lost all their savour. But these first thoughts, being selfish, were swiftly succeeded in a nature so entirely unselfish by other considerations. If it were for Gerald's good that he should go to the other end of the world, that they should be parted for much longer than the five or six weeks of which he spoke so lightly, it would not have been in Madoline's nature to desire him to forego even a possible advantage. She had fancied sometimes of late that he was occasionally dull and lowspirited; and now this letter explained all. He was out of health. He had been leading too quiet and womanish a life, no doubt, in his willingness to spend his days in her society. He had foregone all those hardy exercises and field sports which are so necessary to a man who has no serious work in life. Madoline's telegram ran thus:

"Go by all means, if you think the change will do you good. I tremble at the idea of your crossing the sea at this time of year. Let me see you before you go. If you cannot come here, I will ask my aunt to go to London with me that I may at least bid you good-bye."

The answer came as quickly as electricity could bring it, and although laconie, was satisfactory. "I will be with you about five o'clock this afternoon."

"Dear fellow, how little he thinks of the trouble of travelling so many miles to please me," thought Madoline, and the idea of her lover's affection sustained her against the pain of parting.

"Next year I shall have the right to go wherever he goes," she told herself.

Daphne heard of the Canadian expedition, but said so little about it that Lina wondered at her coolness.

"I thought you would have been more surprised," she said.

"Did you! Why there is really nothing startling or uncommon in the idea," answered Daphne smilingly. "This rushing about the world for sport seems the most fashionable thing among young men with plenty of money. The society journals are always telling us how Lord This, or Sir John That, has gone to the Rockies to shoot wild sheep, or to the North Pole for bears, or to Hungary, or Wallachia, or the Balkan range. The beaten tracks count for nothing nowadays."

When the afternoon came, Lina was alone to receive her lover. Daphne had been seized with a dutiful impulse towards her aunt, and had gone to drink tea at the Rectory, with Edgar in attendance upon her.

"Won't you defer your duty-visit till to-morrow, and wish Gerald good-bye?" asked Lina, when Daphne proposed the expedition.

"No, dear; you can do that for me. This is an occasion on which you ought to have him all to yourself. You will have so much to say to each other."

"If it were mother she would occupy all the time in begging him to wear flannels, put cork soles in all his boots, and avoid damp beds," said Edgar, laughing. "Now, Daphne, put on your hat as quick as you can. It's a lovely afternoon for a walk across the fields. If this frost continue, we shall have skating presently."

The daylight faded slowly; a bright frosty day, a clear and rosy sunset. Lina sat by the pretty hearth in her morning-room, and, exactly as the clock struck five, the footman brought in her dainty little tea-tray, set out the table before the fire, and lighted three or four wax-candles in the old Sèvres candelabra on the mantel-piece. Here she and her lover would be secure from the interruption of callers, which they could not be in the drawing-room.

Five minutes after the hour, there came the sound of wheels upon the gravel drive, a loud ring at the bell, and in the next instant the door of the morning-room was opened, and Gerald came in, looking bulkier than usual in his furred travelling-coat.

"Dear Gerald, this is so good of you,"

said Madoline, rising to welcome him.
"Dearest!" He took both her hands, and stood looking at her in the fire-light, with a countenance full of tenderness-a mournful tenderness-as if he were saddened by the thought of parting. "You are not angry with me for leaving youfor a few weeks?"

"Angry, when you are told the change is necessary for your health! How could you think me so selfish? Let me look at you. Yes; you are looking ill—pale and wan. Gerald, you have been ill, seriously ill, perhaps, since you left here, and you would not tell me for fear of alarming me. Your letters were I am sure that it is so. so hurried, so different from-

"My dear girl, you are mistaken. told you the exact truth about myself when I owned to feeling mopish and depressed. I have had no actual illness, but I feel that a run across the Atlantic will

revive and invigorate me."

"And it is quite right of you to go, dear Gerald, if the voyage is not dangerous in

this weather."

"Dear love, it is no more dangerous than calling a hansom to take one down Regent Street. The hansom may come to grief somehow, or there may be a gale between Liverpool and New York; but there is hardly any safer way a man can dispose of himself than to trust his life to a Cunard steamer.'

"And do you think you will enjoy

yourself in Canada?"

"As much as I can enjoy myself anywhere, away from you. According to my friend Loftus a Canadian winter is the acme of bliss, and, if the winter should break up early, we may contrive to get a little run into the Hudson's Bay country, and a glimpse of the Rockies before we come home.

"That sounds as if you meant to stay rather a long time," said Lina, with a touch

of anxiety.

"Indeed, no, dear. At latest I shall be with you before April is half-over. Think what is to happen early in May.'

" My coming of age. It seems so absurd to come of age at twenty-five, when one is almost an old woman."

"An old woman verily. A girl as fresh in youthful purity as if her cheek still wore the baby-bloom of seventeen summers. But have you forgotten something else that is to happen next May, Lina? Our wedding."

"There has been nothing fixed about that," faltered Madoline; "except, perhaps, that it is to be this year. My father has not said a word as to the actual time, and I know that he wants to keep me as

long as he can.

"And I think you know that I want to have you at the Abbey as soon as I can. I am getting to loathe that big house, for lack of your presence to transform it into We must be married in May, a home. Remember we have only been dearest. waiting for you to come of age, and for all dry-as-dust questions of property to be If we had been Darby the gardener, and Joan the dairy-maid, we should have been married four years ago, shouldn't we, Lina ?"

"I suppose so," she answered, blushing, and taking refuge in the occupation of pouring out the tea, adjusting the eggshell cups and saucers, the little rat-tailed spoons, all the dainty affectations and quaintnesses of high-art tea-drinking, "Darby and Joan are always so impru-

"Yes, but they are often happy. They marry foolishly, and perhaps starve a little after marriage; but they wed while the first bloom is on their love. Come, Lina, say that we shall be married early in May.

"I can promise nothing without my father's consent. My aunt was suggesting that Daphne and I should be married on

the same day."

"Did she?" asked Gerald, his head bent, his hands engaged with his cup and "Two victims led to the altar: saucer. Iphigenia and Polyxena, and no likelihood of a hind being substituted for either young lady. Don't you think there is a dash of vulgarity in a double wedding: a desire to make the very most of the event, to intensify the parade: two sets of bridesmaids, two displays of presents, two honeymoon departures, all the tawdriness and show and artificiality of a modern wedding exaggerated by duplication?"

"I think that is rather Daphne's idea. She begs that she and Edgar may be married very quietly, without fuss of any

kind."

"I had no idea Daphne was capable of such wisdom I thought she would have

asked for four-and-twenty bridesmaids," said Gerald with a cynical laugh.

"She is much more sensible than you have ever given her credit for being,' answered Madoline, a little offended at his tone. "She has behaved sweetly since her engagement."

"And—you—think—she—is—happy?" How slowly he said this, stirring his tea all the while, as if the words were spoken mechanically, his thoughts being wide-

away from them!

"Do you suppose I should be satisfied if I were not sure, in my own mind, of her happiness? How can she fail to be happy? She is engaged to a thoroughly good man, who adores her; and if-if she is not quite as deeply in love with him as he is with her, there is no doubt that her affection for him will increase and strengthen every day.'

"Naturally. He will flatter and fool her till-were it only from sheer vanityshe will ultimately find him necessary to her existence. I knew he had only to persevere in order to win her. I told him

so last summer."

"And Edgar is grateful to you for encouraging him when he was inclined to despair. He told me so yesterday. do not let us talk of Daphne all the time. I want you to tell me about yourself. How good it was of you to come down to say good-bye!"

"Could I do less, dearest? Good-byes are always painful, even when the parting is to be of the briefest, as in this case; but from the moment I knew you wished to see me it was my duty to come.

"Can you stay here to-night?"

"I can stay exactly ten minutes, and no more. I have to catch the half-past six express."

"You are not going to the Abbey?"

"No. I have written to my steward, and I am such a roi fainéant at the best of times that my coming or going makes very little difference. I leave the new hothouses under your care and governance, subject to M'Closkie, who governs you. All their contents are to be for the separate use and maintenance of your rooms while I am away."

"I shall be smothered with flowers."

"May there never be a thorn among them! And now, love, adieu. This time to-morrow I shall be steaming out of the Mersey. I have to see that Gibson has not come to grief in the preparation of my A man wants a world of strange enquiry that goes—philosophically—much

things for Canada, according to the outfitters. My own love, good-bye."

"Good-bye, Gerald, dearest, best, goodbye. Every wind that blows will make me miserable while you are on the sea. You'll let me know directly you arrive, won't you? You'll put me out of my misery as soon as you can?"

"I'll cable the hour I land."

"That will be so good of you," she said,

going with him to the door.

How calm and clear the frosty evening looked; how vivid the steely stars up yonder above the feathery tree-tops; how peaceful and happy all the world!

"God bless you, dear one," said each to each, as they kissed their parting kiss, both hearts so heavy, but one so pure and free from guile, the other so weighed down by secret cares that could not be told.

ON THE JERSEY.

THERE is much to be said on the jersey. There has been as much as a song written already on the jersey. The song runsto quote it sparingly:

I used to complain of the want of beaux, Which I cannot do now, for goodness knows.

Since the day when I first put a jersey on, I'm looked at by William, and Robert, and John.

Their heads are turned, and their hearts are gone, If they once see me near, with the jersey on.

And if I speak truly, I must confess, I do like the dear little jersey dress.

Oh, the jersey, the jersey, The neat little, sweet little, &c., &c.

Now, in its present shape of a new upper part, or "body," of a lady's dress, is the jersey to have its fashion and to lose its fashion, quite after the manner of other fashions, with the silence and the smile that are—philosophically—usual? There are the acute observers of fashions; there are the artists who perpetrate the fashions; there are the cynical loungers who always have a sour insinuation that there is a special reason why each fashion has come; there are the indefatigable manufacturers pouncing on fashions as affording hints for new and profitable occupation for their looms; and, with any and all of these, is the jersey to be recognised, to be grappled with, to have its noting; and is the jersey, then, in its turn, to be gone, making way for some newer object?

It is a broad enquiry, this. It is an

deeper than might be suspected. Let it be looked at with becoming gravity.

Three marked strides have been made in costumes, since mankind and womankind were driven to assume them. The first, coming more in the shape of a prelude to a fact, than a fact itself, yet amounted to a fact, and must be counted. It was the era of woad-smears; those concentric and arrow-headed figurings on the flat "buff," that could be smeared off again should the wearer—after half a century or so-weary of the design; it was the era of similarly applied tints and outlines, managed, somehow, to be indelibly punctured in. Then came costume proper; came, that is to say, the putting on of something from off of something else, to the end that, as well as warmth and decoration, the real man should be hidden away. It was fragmentary at the beginning; a tuft of feathers; a slice of animal skin; a bunch of animals' tails; festoons and circlets of strung teeth, of withered berries, of seashore shells, of gathered and sun-dried seeds. Next, this adding of something came to be the adding of garments that covered the whole. These were of air-tanned and hut-dressed leather, or of textile fabrics; which latter were obtained from appliances capable, at first, of only narrow weavings, that had to be Yet such fabrics gave scope varieties. The warp and woof combined. for endless varieties. could be of grass, of stalk-shreds, of pulled cotton, of rolled wool, of twisted silk, of beaten gold, of beaten silver. They could be made solid, or slight; woven straight, woven in stripes; used of the raw tint, or used dyed; used of a single sort, or dexterously mixed. It was fortunate there was all this freedom and opportunity; for here, in this third and last era, fashion had birth; fashion which has remained in existence down to the present time. It has had sideruns, of course; it has had overlayings; it has had rich variations, in shape, in texture, in value; in beauty, in want of beauty; in cumbersomeness; in propriety and adaptability; in many more. It has been, at times, an impediment, by stiffness and stuffing; by grotesque elongation, or, on the other hand, brevity; by an inexhaustible list of whims and absurdities. It has been, at times, a danger, by casting sections of the clothing away, leaving now one portion, now another, of the surface injuriously exposed. It has attacked the head, with hair lifted sky-ward on wires, to the accompaniment of many yards of There was Henry the Eighth himself. costly stuff at the heels to trail. It has Stow says of him, and Stow had seen his

sunk into the grossest inconsistency and effeminacy, by perishable texture, by perishable colour, by pearl-powder and pink, by pigtail, and perfume, and patch. Still, here it is, in direct and undeniable descent, in full occupation of its hereditary estates.

Here also, however, is the music-hall lady, trolling out her original chorus,

"Oh! the jersey, the jersey, The neat little, sweet little jersey;"

and inviting her fascinated audience to troll it out with her; and naturally, in another moment, this new-time songstress will be asking in what manner all this hangs on the jersey, and how it is that it

concerns it.

She shall be told. Textile fabrics, which are the direct ancestors of her modern garment, and which may be termed cloth generically, have not only been of universal adoption from age to age, and from reign to reign, for "skirt" and "body"—that is, to cover the main parts of the human edifice; but they have been obliged to be used for every purpose of costume for which fabrics could possibly be required. There was nothing else, except leather. Made in more or less wide strips, cut out from these with more or less skill, and planned, and stitched, and fitted to the limb, cloth was inconvenient material for stockings. Yet let thought be given to Anne Boleyn drawing it on as such; to Mary Stuart with her shoes incommoded with it; to Jane Shore, to the Fair Maid of Kent, to Queen Eleanor, to the Lion Heart's Berengaria, to Philippa, to the Empress Maud. Significance is given by the remembrance to that historic fall of the Countess of Salisbury's historic garter. Smiles could scarcely have been restrained about it; for in that fourteenth century, with "bombast hose," as Gascoigne describes some in his Steel Glas, the material had no elasticity to keep itself in place till there could come a chance of remedy, and immediate awkwardness must have resulted.

Men were subject to the same uncouthness and inconvenience in those old centuries, of course. There was Jack of Newbury as a sample, otherwise called John of Newcombe. John of Newcombe. The chronicler happens to describe his dress. He says of him when he set out to meet Henry the Eighth: "He wore a plain russet coat, a pair of kersie breeches and stockings of the same piece sewed to his slops."

highness, and had been bred a tailor, and could give an eye critically to such detail: "You must understand that King Henry the Eighth did wear only cloth hose, or hose cut out of ell-broad taffaty." There was William Rufus, that ruddy and early Norman king. Robert of Gloucester has quite a lively anecdote of him and his royal stockings.

As his Chamberlayne him brought, as he rose on a day,

A morrow for to wear a pair of Hose of Say, He asked what they costned? "Three shillings," he said.

"Fie a dibbes!" quoth the king. "Who say so vile a Deed,

King to wear so vile a cloth, but it costned more!
Buy a pair for a Mark, or thou shalt ha cory fore."
A worse pair enough, the other swith him brought,
And seyed they costned a Mark, and uneath he
them bought.

"Aye, bel-amy," quoth the king, "these were well bought:

In this manner serve me, or ne serve me not."

Say was "vile cloth," this asserts, on regal (or poetical-regal) authority. It was well-known, vile or not, and whether used for stockings or for other purposes. Its other names were sey, saie, says, saïette, saga, twisted at last (in the tongue-frame; not in that with woof and warp, with treddles and smooth-worn beam) into sarge and serge. Camden speaks of it, writing in 1586. He says: "Those slight stuffes which are called bays and says, and other such like stuffes of linen and woollen weaving;" and in that little transposition of says into bays, with its different spelling of base, and baie, and bayette (because it was imported at one time from Baia, Naples), of bayze, and baize, the material is familiar enough. Kersey, also, the choice of Jack of Newbury, can be understood. There was Kentish kersey, made in Kent; with various other kinds made here and there, in county and shire, all over the working land; and they were all of coarse wool, made into coarse loose cloth of the frieze sort, twilled, and therefore pliable, easily fitted and folded to the figure. It is more difficult to suppose that there was jersey in those old centuries; but there was. Jersey was the finest part of the wool to be found on the whole fleece, separated from the rest by combing, and made into the daintiest, silkiest, most flexible and inviting yarn. Sey was the parent (or the offspring) of jer-sey and of ker-sey, both; and in them all, as well as in Gascoigne's bombast, and Camden's bays, and the ell-broad taffaty fashioned to cover the sturdy legs which supported Henry the Eighth's sturdy figure, there are hints, in

plenty, of the "cloth" of the old centuries, and of its many diversities. That there should have been those diversities shows nothing strange, they clearly were so very easily to be obtained. Cloth being, at first, simply woof and warp, stretched head to foot for length, having a crossing, right and left, suggested them out of its very composition. Threads, it was seen, could be coupled, could be skipped, forming twill and diaper, and rib and check; threads could be looped up for nap, could be snipped, after such looping, for pile, could be introduced for spaces on occasion, could be withdrawn when it was no longer necessary their effect should be there. Threads. also, could be driven firmly together, could be allowed to lie sparingly apart; and all this, combined with colour, and disposition of colour, combined with size of thread, and whether it had been spun slack or hard, gave opening for an infinity of invention and novel combination that has never come to a standstill yet, and that may be looked for confidently from century to century, on and on.

But with all, or with any, species of broad cloth, there was a drawback. frame was required; beams and cross-beams, or rods and cross-rods; uprights and sitting-places; concentrated attention; a corner of the homestead inexorably appropriated, or a gathering together of quantities of such a frame-apparatus in some proprietor's shed. It was not convenient. It did not suit all persons, all places, all opportunities. There must come an invention of something that could be used on quite other circumstances, and on quite another plan. Something that a goodwife could take up and could lay down; something she could resort to again in a minute, and for a minute, if another interruption came, or whilst she chatted an hour or two, as her time served, by the hearth, or at her open door. The invention came, of course, Some genius looked at a coat-ofin time. mail, and looked again; observed the flexible and interlocked chain-work; noted how this had come from a single linking, and a single linking again, and the two interlaced till there was good breadth; saw how this could be copied in thread; saw the magic that could come from a pair of slim rods, or pins, of steel, of brass, of silver, throwing off stitch after stitch, and stitch after stitch, in a bag or round; and finally, this genius produced knitting. In Scotland, it is supposed, this idea came. There is no company of stocking-knitters known earlier than

1527, in which year a company established itself in Paris, choosing for its patron saint St. Fiacre, because he was supposed (in France) to be a Scotch prince, the son of a Scotch king, and it was wanted to do Scotland, the knitting country, every honour. Be this as it may, knitted stockings of rare kind came to be seen in England on choice and spare occasions, Henry the Eighth is related, by Stow, to have had a pair imported, once, and again after long interval, from Spain. Young Edward the Sixth accepted a pair from Sir Thomas Gresham. Elizabeth, when she had been queen two years, in 1560, had a pair presented to her. Says Stow, "Her silk-woman, Mistress Montague, presented to her majestie a pair of black knit silk stockings, for a new year's gift; which, after a few days' wearing"-a lengthy piece of mediæval queenly toilette which may be noted with amusement-"pleased her highness so well that she sent for Mistress Montague and asked her where she had them, and if she could help her to any more? Who answered saying: 'I made them carefully on purpose for your majesty; and seeing they please you so well, I will presently set more in hand.' 'Do so,' said the queen, 'for I like silk stockings so well, that I will not henceforth wear any more cloth hose."*

Still, silk knitted hose for highnesses did not represent all. The masses always get recognition somehow, and a stride towards this was made as soon as 1564. Hose, half-hose, trunk-hose, were knitted in that year, in more plebeian worsted. observant young tradesman, named Rider, serving his worthy apprenticeship in one of the little timber shops which made a bustling market-place of the old timber London Bridge, is credited with this. The legend is that he saw some Italians, near his abode, knitting worsted, that he seized the notion, and had a pair of worsted stockings knitted for a gift to the Earl of Pembroke. There is fine historical colouring in this bestowal of silk on a triumphant Tudor queen, and of homely wool on this

particular earl. He was the husband of Catherine, the poor beheaded young Lady Jane Grey's sister; had there been no beheading, his place would have been very near to the throne, and in acknowledgment of this, perhaps, he was plotting to bring forward the claims of Mary Queen of Scots. He was prominent, at any rate. Rider made wise choice of him; his worsted hose were seen, were imitated, and rapidly were universally adopted all over the country. So is there fine historic colouring in what followed. William Lee, Master of Arts, of Woodborough, near Nottingham, expelled from St. John's, Cambridge, for the (academical) guilt of marrying, watched the wife, for whom he had lost so much, as she sat practising her new accomplishment of knitting beside him, and, as her pins cleverly used up her worsted (for him, of course), he saw the stocking come. It was in 1589. Knitting had had but a short life. It had come out of frames, to do away with frames—as well as to give that peculiar power to pull and fit, that could never come from cloth. But William Lee saw how he could put it back into frames again, to make it quick and cheap for such yeomen as had not broad pieces enough to buy the best, and William Lee did it. Sey, and jer-sey, and ker-sey, and bombast, and ell-broad taffaty, had formidable rival, then; and William Lee, proud and hopeful, applied to Elizabeth for patronage.

Had the popularisation of knitted stocking by the Pembroke party, the Grey party, the Stuart party, anything to do with it? Elizabeth, at any rate, frowned upon the project; and the English inventor, knowing of the St. Fiacre stocking-knitters in Paris, went over there to try for the countenance of Henri Quatre. It was promised him. He and nine weavers settled at Rouen, but Henri Quatre was murdered, there was no patronage amidst all the turmoil for anybody, and poor William Lee, crushed and heart-broken, died. His weavers knitted on, though; one of them, Aston, showing he had his master's early spirit in him, and that he would succeed, if he could, getting some half-dozen of his fellowapprentices to return to England with him and to ply their frames here. Doing this, they saw the death of Elizabeth; there came the reigns of James and Charles, and then their successors, bending over the selfsame frames, and at scores of others that had been built meantime like them, felt they were strong enough to be constituted

^{*} It is curious that, in more modern times, there should occur another Mistress Montague pleasantly connected with stockings. The colour of hers was blue, however. Blue stockings, as is known, came to be the distinction (or the ridicule) conferred on all the eighteenth century Mistress Montague's "lion" friends, through Benjamin Stillingfleet, one of them, who wore blue stockings always, and who had so fine a wit, Portman Square could not get on without him. He was the life and soul of every assembly, the moment he arrived. Hannah More's poem, Bas Bleu, may be seen for this—if desired.

a body corporate, and petitioned Oliver Cromwell to make them so. Refusal was their fate again. Cromwell would give nothing, no protection, no privilege, no monopoly. For two or three years more frame-knitting had to go on under what might well be thought the old ban, till at last, in 1663, Charles the Second, being ready to grant everybody everything easily, granted the wished-for charter, and none but members of the company could sell stockings made from frames in London, or in any town or village for ten miles round.

The song of the jersey may come again now, wafted faintly along, nearly overtoned as it has been with so much noise of frame and loom. The singer can sound it louder, for the thread of which a jersey is composed has been reached here, and it will soon be knitted on. Fairly get to it, improvements had to come to the Lee frame. to the Aston frame, or the Robinson frame, for Robinson, curate of Thurcaston, Leicestershire, is known to have applied much patience to frame-knitting, and is called by some the inventor of it. It had, in one form or another, to spread over Nottinghamshire, and over Leicestershire (at Hinckley, in that county, it was introduced, in 1640, by one William Iliffe); it had to spread, more or less, over Derbyshire; it had to be added to and altered and improved, getting the "Derby rib," from Strutt and Woollatt, in 1756, getting thereby by palpable degrees the power to make open-work or "lace," to make a curious sort of honeycomb fabric used for aprons and handkerchiefs and waistcoats and caps. Then whole under-garments came to be made on frames; from the fine, fleecy, pure-white "jersey" wool vests for ladies' wear, to the darkdyed, stubborn, long, and high-up shirts (called "jersey" still, or sometimes miscalled "guernsey") for the rough wear of men getting their living on the sea. Small frames had to be thought of also, on which women could work at home. By means of stationary pegs over which wool was passed along and along, by means of hand-pins once more, of hand-hooks (the crochet), so many variations were made to what grew to be called the hosiery trade, as seem in enumeration to be endless. In their quiet cottages and in homely factories women were at work, turning out shawls, half-shawls, jackets, "cardigans," hoods, opera-caps, petticoats, "comforters," boas, cuffs, muffs, boots, bootees, bootikins, gaiters, knee-caps, collarettes, cuffs, gloves, sleeves, ruffs, a whole circle round and wait, as precedent bids; being

They had to learn to embellish all more. these with frill, and tuft, and colour, and regulated holes for tracery-work, and fashion; they had to submit all work that this enabled them to do to the gains of "middle-women," who collected it from their cottages, and gave them new, and brought them back their wage or they had to give up home and home-duties, and to go to and fro to factories night and morning in a chatting herd. Finally, the stocking-stitch and the stocking-frame had to get that reformation that allows, in its perfect stage, a thousand frames, and a thousand thousand, to be propelled at once by steam; and when this is thus added to the account, the genealogy of the present jersey has been tracked throughout.

Will the jersey live, however? Is the Elizabeth of the day about to utter, "I like knitted bodices so well that henceforth I will wear no cloth bodice?" Modistes must look to it. The issue is theirs (in a commercial sense) chiefly. For it is unique in the history of costume that the stocking-stitch should be applied to the external and ornamental "body" of women. Modistes have had undisputed dominion in that region, hitherto. Throughout all the textile centuries (to identify them as befits), they have never till now had a moment's overthrow, because there has never been a moment's overthrow in the rule of the generic "cloth." Truly, oceans of tears have been shed over it, an Olympus of headache has been raised by its means; women have "dropped" through it, have fainted, have had hysterical seizures, high-pitched and strong. And supposing the jersey is doomed to come (or, of course, the natural development of the jersey; it is sure to be amenable to Darwinian evolution; parting with features that are objectionable, pushing out others for which there is good need), the jersey will quietly make its shaping for itself, will widen where width is wanted, will remain in its close lines where it is not strained; the jersey will "give," it will right itself again, it will even condescend to recover, humbly, from breakage with a darn; and, surely, many dressing-rooms will be freed from storms, many work-rooms will contain less distressed apprentices, and there is no one can say but what the revolution brought about will be a gigantic revolution—to be related in future histories with becoming seriousness.

Meanwhile (whilst philosophers look

assured that it is difficult to judge, at times, whether revolution is at hand, and that to wait is wise), the present demand for jerseys has not been without results. The circular frames, used to produce the long tubes of wool and cotton that are afterwards cut up and squeezed to shape as marketable stockings, have been enlarged in size till they can produce a tube of wool thirty-six inches in circumference, known in the factories as "Jersey cloth." of it have been woven, already; miles upon When each tube is detached from its frame, in lengths of forty or fifty yards, it is slit from end to end, that it may be folded open, and dressed and pressed like other cloths, for use. Then the pattern of the jersey is laid upon it (in sizes, as, say, for shoes), the jerseys are cut, are sewn, are pressed flat again, are in a fit state for the lady who eulogises them in song. Already, while the cloth is still in its open state, folded in its large smooth rolls, it is suggesting purposes for which it can be advantageously applied. Long curtains have been made of it; outside cloaks and coats; and as the weavingwomen sit in their long light shops, amongst the whirr of the machinery, and their own snatches, now and again, of country song, it can be seen that they make bags for their implements of spoilt ends of it, that they utilise it as dusters, that they cover pincushions with it for their pins. Anyway, a new article of commerce has been introduced, that is sure, in some form or another, not to be swiftly laid aside.

HARD TIMES.

HARD TIMES! and so they be, honey; cupboard

and hearth are bare, We can scarcelins boil the kettle, with the weed thou'st gathered there.

Nay, thou maunt touch t' brass i't teapot; that's for the rent thou knows,

I'd liefer perish here at home, than live on't best i't House.

I've never troubled the parish yet, and I've none se long to wait, And mebby things 'll be better, now t'iron's got

agate: But I've had harder times than this; whist! thou

wilt rest enow. I could mak sleep my supper when I was as young as thou.

I have had harder times, I say; the body may pine and spare

But when the heart is famishing it's a bitterer thing to bear;

Come hap thysel i't blanket; I'll tell thee o'er my tale, T'will make a better hushaby than the call of the rising gale.

Thou think'st a deal on thy golden curls and those blue eyes of thine;

I tell thee, lass, at their brightest they never matched wi' mine!

Aye, I hear thee, laugh an it please thee; I know what my Willie said,

Art thou to mock at his judgment, because he's cold and dead !

It were a summer morning when I stood out there

on t' pier, And tried to laugh as brave as aught, and tried to join the cheer,

As the Lecta swept o'er the harbour bar, and her sail flew out to t' breeze, And taut and trim like a bird she went, over the

And Willie leant ower t' bulwarks, and waved his hand to me,

And held the rose I'd gien him up, for all t' crowd

And when I'd watched the last on her, I turned up this very court,

To sew my wedding duds, again the Lecta rode in port.

Bairn, summer glowed to autumn; autumn to winter paled;

It was six long weary months at last, from the day the Lecta sailed;

Six! and two should ha' seen her back, and hope was sinking down, And never a word to the yearning hearts, that

waited in the town. There was work enow among us; and no "union"

then to draw Fond uns who should know better beneath its iron

law;
No "strikes" to hunger wives and bairns, and
madden half their men:
We mout ha' less of learning, but we'd more of wisdom then.

But worse than cold or clemming, were those

weary watching days, While the wild wind swept the angry seas; or the cruel crawling haze

Hid even the great grey tossing waste, where I'd stare from dawn to dark, Just for the chance on the far faint line, of the sail

of a home-bound bark. Day by day, and week by week, and month by

month dragged past, And hope died out, and cold despair turned o'er the page at last;

The silent doom hung heavily, till, like a funeral pall, "Missing, the Lecta, and all hands," closed slowly over all.

And now, a bitter woman, lonely and old I sit, Beside this barren hearth of mine, and tell a bairn of it !

Hard times! thou hast to bear a bit; but get away! thou'rt young, There's hope in each rising sun for thee, and joy in

a glozing tongue. Wait till thou know'st that thou might'st weep, and not a soul to heed,

That thou might'st die and none to mourn, die like

a useless weed; Wait, till thine all of love and life, lies in yon wild wide sea,

Then dare to even woes, and come to plain "hard times" to me!

MISERICORDIA.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS. PART I.

COMING up the hill from where the red-tiled cottages of the village clustered together, you looked through the lych-gate and saw a long row of elm-trees towering skywards.

In spring, the golden sunshine filtered through the net-work of their branches, bright with fresh, young, pink-veined leaves. In autumn (as now), their leaves died instead of lived in the sunlight, and here and there, each moment, one came fluttering softly down to add itself to the rustling brown carpet gathering on the edges of the pathway beneath.

Looking (still through the gate as through a high-arched casement) you caught a glimpse of a square turreted tower, old, and clasped and bound with ivy every-

From this tower the chimes of four sweet tinkling bells dropped into the valley hour by hour, as though to bid men and women give a thought to God and heaven in the

midst of their busy daily life.

Sometimes (as now) upon a quiet autumn evening swallows gathered about the old church tower, twittering to each other of their coming journey to warmer climes, or flew circling in the mingled gold and blue of the clear dome above. The day had been one of those that summer seems to leave behind and autumn smilingly appro-No June day could have given the world brighter sunshine-no softer breeze could have stirred the flowers, pink and blue and snowy-white, that blossomed here and there among the graves.

But now the evening was closing in, and autumn began to assert itself. A crispness made itself felt in the air through which the dead leaves dropped. The church stood high on the hill-top, and below, the fertile valley stretched to the horizon, mapped out in fields, some of which were golden-brown with their load of ripe rich grain. Here and there woods clustered, and through the midst of the smiling

panorama ran the river.

On one side of the churchyard, a little way down the steep slope of the hill, was a red-brick many-gabled house, the rectory.

Here, too, were the signs of age, seen in the old-fashioned mullioned casements, one of which, looking towards the church, stood

open, and barred back.

The changing leaves of a wisteria rustled round it; a branch of climbing-rose, with one late flower showing pale against the green, swayed coyly in, as though it would fain claim for that last sweet blossom of the waning year some kindly notice.

Within shone the faint light of a readinglamp-very faint as yet, for the night outside was only dusky, not dark. Indeed, it would not have much chance of growing an effect the exact contrary to this.

really dark for some hours to come; for over the valley the sky was ruddy with the lingering light of sunset, and looked like a fire behind the trees; and a pallid crescentmoon shimmered, putting in blue tints to vary the lovely picture of a perfect

autumnal evening.

Beyond the church on the other side, and running out some way behind and beyond it, was a sort of waste land, studded with trees, and entered by a stile in the low stone This place was a very paradise to the village children out of school hours, and especially at the present season, for was not the ground strewn with acorns in their dainty cups, and other treasures, too, in the shape of fir-cones, and many strange and curiously-coloured fungi, droll to see and amusing to handle, but, as every sensible child knew full well, by no means desirable as articles of food? The same might be said of the bunches of beautiful scarlet berries, which hung temptingly across the hedge that ran round the lower end of the waste. They seemed very pretty, almost as pretty as the delicate purple flowers which preceded them; but were better to look at than to

Life has its night-shade berries as well as Nature; things fair to see, yet a "tree of knowledge" of which to eat is to dieto die to the peace and happiness of life, to die to the faith in all things good, and

pure, and true.

The Rev. John Erlam, vicar of Halcombeon-the-Hill, in the days of his hot and hasty youth, had stretched forth a rash hand, and taken of the blossom and fruit of life, which seemed beautiful beyond compare, yet whose aftermath was as the very "shadow of death." When yet scarce across the threshold of manhood, he had fallen under the irresistible spell of a He was then but an woman's charm. ensign in a marching regiment, yet already a favourite in the corps to which he belonged. He had a certain independence beyond his pay, and on the income of these two sources combined, married his penniless fair one.

Early marriage, even under the most favourable circumstances, is almost always fatal to a man's career in the service. A man grows less daring, less ready to make the best of any station, any duty that may come in his way, when he is conscious of a wife and children whose welfare and comfort depend upon his life; but in John Erlam's case it appeared that marriage had

When, but a few short months after his wedding-day, his regiment was put under orders for India (then in a state of extreme turmoil), the young fellow, whom everybody expected to see somewhat cast down at so prompt a separation from his bride, was apparently almost wild with delight at the prospect of getting a taste of gunpowder. The wife went to live with an elderly relative near Plymouth; the young husband went to the East, distinguished himself by his fearless gallantry,

was mentioned in despatches, and promoted to his lieutenancy.

Everybody said "Erlam had a grand career before him." Some women envied his wife, thinking how proud she must be of her handsome soldier-lad (for he was little more); and then—no one could guess why or wherefore—when the fighting was done, John Erlam's military career came to a sudden end. He went home on leave; "to fetch his wife out," people said; but instead of rejoining, sold out, and that without writing a line to any of his brother officers to explain so strange

step.

When his comrades heard that "Erlam's papers were in," they were alike amazed and puzzled. They discussed the matter this way and that, looking at it from every possible standpoint. But the only conclusion they came to was that there was something about it that was being "kept dark"; an expression that might equally well have been applied to the man's life during the next few years. It was known in the old regiment that Erlam had gone to live in that undefined locality called "abroad"; that he had taken his wife with him; that his father, Mr. Rodney Erlam, of Halcombe Hall, was taciturn in speaking of him, and there all information ended.

Time changes all things, most of all that little world, a regiment. Old men go, new men come, some die, others exchange, and gradually the old interests fade as a new society springs up. Men who have been prominent figures in the community become but names to which no one attaches any very particular ideas. For ten years the regiment which had been John Erlam's served abroad. For fifteen, it so chanced that none of those who had been his comrades ever came across the man whose promising career had been cut short so strangely; the man whose history had in it some element that needed to be "kept dark."

At the end of that long lapse of years, an old comrade chanced to visit the neighbourhood of Halcombe-on-the-Hill, and in its genial parish priest recognised the young soldier who had fought in the first Sikh campaign.

The two old comrades had many a pleasant chat together; they spoke of old friends; and resuscitated old jokes; but on the cause or causes that led John Erlam to leave the service, or of that long waste of intervening years that lay between them and now, was never a word spoken.

One incident made Major Daverin marvel not a little; though, like the true soldier and gentleman he was, he marvelled in

unbroken silence.

It was this.

The rector of Halcombe, naturally enough, took him to the rectory, and there introduced him to his wife and child.

Mrs. Erlam was a graceful sympathetic woman, brown-eyed, low-voiced, a woman years younger than her husband, and who had been his ward. The child was a boy of five years old, brown-eyed like the mother, a creature lovely to behold, perfect in feature, and crowned a household king with a

crowd of golden locks.

The close and subtle bond between this little family of three was a thing that made itself felt in every look and gesture. Having once been in their company, it was impossible to think of them apart. They always come to your remembrance as a group—the three heads—one on which the snow began to mingle thickly with the black; the mother's fair, rippling like the sand when the tide has run out; and the child's an aureole of gold above an angel brow.

Vivian Daverin had been dining at the rectory. Dinner over, the two men went

out together into the gloaming.

"This is a favourite haunt of mine," said Mr. Erlam, leading the way to a broad pathway at the foot of the churchyard overlooking the valley. "Here I do many an hour of 'sentry go,' pondering over my sermons, enjoying the fresh air, and the view below there."

Major Daverin smiled at his friend's lapse into the lingo of old times, and the two

were soon pacing up and down.

On the left, a sort of natural ravine lay between them and the window in the projecting wing of the rectory, and across this dell, like a beacon across a miniature sea, shone the glimmer of the study lamp.

With what peaceful beauty was the night

closing in!

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Swallows flitted and twittered no longer, the song-birds in the trees were silent. The red glow behind the fir-woods had grown dim. A fleecy veil of mackerel-cloud, seeming to centre in and mantle round the rising moon, only added to the softness of light and shade. The bells chimed in falling cadence, one, two, three, four, and then da capo.

Two cigar ends glowed in the dusky twilight. Up and down, up and down, the dark figures paced, now and again standing still awhile side by side to look at the panorama stretched below, a picture done in ebony and silver, and softened by exquisite half-lights of blue and grey.

"Erlam," said Major Daverin, after a long look round, a look that lingered last upon that open window across the dell, the window where the home-signal gleamed, "it seems to me you are a very happy man; you would be hard put to it to know what to wish for, if the chance were given you, eh?"

"I should, indeed. I thank God day by day in that I am just what you say—a happy man."

The words were said quietly, reverently, almost solemnly. The rector's deep-set eyes—eyes keen and clear, yet apt to soften into marvellous tenderness—were looking far away across the valley. Perhaps it was as well; for so he missed a quick and furtive glance of scrutiny cast upon him by his companion. That woman with the exquisite voice and perfect graciousness of womanhood—that perfect wife and loving mother, whom the rector called "Milly," was not the girl-wife Major Daverin remembered in the days that were past.

True, he had only seen her once, for she had been but little with the regiment during those few months of its stay in England after her marriage. But he remembered her.

She was a remarkable woman, a woman not likely to be fergotten when once seen. She had black flashing eyes, a manner at once abrupt and imperious, much beauty of form, thick dark tresses growing low upon her brow, and, just across the temple, a strange scar, almost like a sabre-cut. Her hands were long and lithe, and of a soft dusky shade. She might well have had gipsy blood in her veins. She was restless alike in look and manner; in a word, an utter contrast in every possible respect to this fair sweet Millicent, John Erlam's present wife.

"She is dead then," thought Major Daverin; adding to himself, "a good thing too; if I mistake not, she had the look of a wild animal, a creature whom nothing short of death could tame."

Awhile longer the two men paced up and down. Each moment the moon rose higher in the heaven, trailing her veil of fleecy cloud after her. Each moment the fire behind the trees grew fainter. Each moment the light in the study window grew clearer, glinting on the leaves of the wisteria, and on the solitary snow-white rose outside.

"I mustn't forget it's Saturday night, a bad night to dine with a parson," said Major Daverin as the clock chimed the quarter.

"I will walk the length of the lane with you. I have a sick man to see before I go in," was the reply. So they set off down the lane, casting grotesquely-long shadows on the deep ruts left by the hay-carts, as they went along.

At the door of a cottage some way off they parted, with a long cordial hand-clasp, and many kindly words.

Then, the rector, bowing his tall head beneath the low doorway, went in.

We will not follow him.

Suffice it to say he carried comfort where comfort was needed, and that without striving to probe and pry into the wound in a stricken heart. He did not linger long by the sick bed, once a few hopeful cheering words said. It was one of his maxims that a cotter's hovel was as sacred as a

the sick bed, once a few hopeful cheering words said. It was one of his maxims that a cotter's hovel was as sacred as a nobleman's castle, and he knew that Saturday night was a busy time with working people. He even apologised for his visit, such as it was.

As he left the cottage, Mr. Erlam let his thoughts drift away to the past; the past that had been called so vividly to his mind by the interview with his old comrade Vivian Daverin. He was not one much given to dwelling on dead sorrows. "Let the dead past bury its dead," was in his estimation a wise maxim to abide by—unless there was some good to be done by setting it aside.

But to-night the old trials, the old bitter searing griefs, the agony of shame, the cruel sense of degradation, all the demon crew of torments that had once beset his life, seemed to gibe and mock at him as he went his way homewards through the moonlit world.

He was a man who from the teaching of experience had learnt to hold himself well in hand.

This tone of retrospective thought was morbid, unhealthy, ungrateful to the great Giver of all Good-the God who, through much tribulation, through many deep waters, had led him into "paths of pleasant-ness, and ways of peace," to a peace ineffable, unspeakable, such as the lives of few men hold-to a love in which an allwomanly, loving, gracious woman filled heart and thought and mind, giving in unstinted measure perfect sympathy, entire devotion, passionate tenderness. Wrestling with those bitter memories that would obtrude themselves upon his thoughts, John Erlam turned once more into the quiet of God's Acre. He would go home soon; indeed, he had work still to do for the morrow, and he had not given little Rodney his "kiss good-night;" but these thought-demons must be exorcised—it felt like a profanation to carry them into Milicent's dear presence. So he turned once more into the favourite pathway where it was so often his custom to pace to and fro while thinking over his sermon, or pondering some literary problem.

Neither sermon nor lore of cultured mind held his thoughts now. He was a man of tall inches, as we have already said, spare in form, but lithe and powerful. His locks were thick, and clustered round a high square brow; they were flecked with grey, and he had a habit of tossing them back with his hand when in argument, mental or actual, he grew heated. He did so now, first having bared his head to the breeze which stole up from the valley.

It seemed as if by this gesture he strove to clear his brain from the phantoms that haunted it.

How beautiful the night was! The serene moon had cast off the veil of filmy clouds, and sailed alone in the clear air. The sky looked deeply purple; the stars, no longer faint, seemed to hang low from its eternal depths. The mist lay low in the valley here and there, but the moonlight turned all the leaves of the woods to silver. Over by the lych-gate the leaves of the tall elms whispered softly to each other.

"The world looks so beautiful to-night, it would almost cheat one into faneying that no such things as sorrow and suffering exist in it," said Mr. Erlam, speaking his thoughts softly to himself, a thing not uncommon with earnest thinkers. "Now for home, and Rodney's 'kiss good-night."

He smiled softly, happily; and then, still holding his hat in his hand, and swinging it gently by his side, turned to go.

Only turned, though. For, as if to give the lie to that seeming of perfect peace and happiness told in the loveliness of that lovely night, a long shuddering sigh mingled with the whispering of the leaves

above the lych-gate.

The rector stood still a moment, glancing hurriedly round, and then he saw what had before escaped his notice. A woman was sitting huddled on the edge of a green mound, her head bowed upon her knees, and shrouded in the poor shawl that was about her shoulders. Her bonnet, or rather the mere wisp of black stuff and dirty ribbon that did duty for one, had fallen down her back, leaving her dark tangled head bare.

In a moment every thought of self, of past trials, of present joys, of everything save the fact that here, close to him, almost at his feet, was some poor wanderer, some heart-broken wretch needing help and comfort, were driven from the rector's mind. When his Master called to him through the "weary and heavy-laden," must not all else be set aside save the longing to know how best he might answer to that call?

"You are in trouble; tell me, can I help you? I am the minister of this parish. Do not be afraid to trust me. You are a stranger here, I see, and weary."

John Erlam uttered these sentences, not all together, but at intervals, hoping that each one would make the shrouded head uplift itself, would show him the hidden face.

But the woman never stirred.

He laid his hand upon her shoulder, and felt a shudder pass over her as she listened—that was all.

As they stood thus, a strange group, he, still bare-headed, clothed in priestly dress, the badge of his sacred mission as a comforter to the sorrowful, bending over the woman's shrouded, crouching figure, a bat flitted like an eerie shade from the massed ivy on the tower, and circled round and round them.

"My house is close here, not five minutes' walk down the hill; you can have food and rest. Surely you stand sorely in need of both? Tell me what I can do for you."

The woman seemed to gather herself together, hugging her own breast, moaning piteously the while, and shivering as though the night were in January, instead of September.

"What can I do?" said the rector,

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puzzled and distressed. "Shall I fetch someone else, some woman?"

"No, no; fetch no one," said the poor creature, rocking herself to and fro as though in sorest agony either of mind or body. "It is best you and I should meet alone. John! John! it is I—your wife—Judith. Oh, my God—do you hate

me so bitterly as that?"

She might well ask that question of the man before her, for, as she spoke, as she rose and faced him, as the moonlight fell upon her black sunken eyes, her wan and withered face, with the scar upon the hollow temple showing white and livid, he threw up his arms almost as though he would have felled her to the ground where she stood, and gave a low yet exceeding bitter cry, such a smothered cry so might be wrung from the unwilling lips of a strong man tortured beyond all power of endurance.

Then, as she watched him, her eyes dilated with horror, with wild expectation of she knew not what, as, stretching out his shaking hands towards heaven, he turned away from her, away from the woman who had fallen across his pathway like some loathsome blight, to where the lamp gleamed through the leaf-wreathed window, towards the home where Millicent sat watching for his coming, with little Rodney

at her knee.

SOME CURIOUS RACES.

THE catalogue of sports and pastimes is unlimited, but as far as popularity goes, racing everywhere bears away the bell. The reason is not far to seek. Unless the spectator knows something of the points and niceties of the play, looking on at cricket, golf, curling, billiards, or any other game of skill, is but dull work; whereas anyone with eyes to see can understand a race, be it on land, water, or ice, and follow the varying phases of the struggle with interest.

It is not our present purpose to deal with the races dear to bookmakers, and dear in a double sense to backers; the contests we have in our mind being trials of speed of an irregular character as regards competitors, conditions, or circumstances.

Some little time back, a gallant captain undertook to run a hundred yards against a bay mare, in the barrack-yard near York; the course to be fifty yards out, turning round a post and ending at the starting point. To preclude collision, separate lines

were marked out for the competitors to run in, and two turning-posts being put up at the extremity of fifty yards. The captain got off with a slight advantage, but the mare reached the posts with him, making the turn very cleverly, while he turned too widely. Thirty yards further man and mare were nearly level, and then, just when it promised something exciting, the contest came to a sudden and unsatisfactory end. There happened to be a hole in the track, and the captain, putting his foot in it, fell, and before he fairly recovered his legs, the mare was past the winningpost; the onlookers being of opinion that, mishap or no mishap, the result would have been the same. When three men have been the same. were pitted against three horses in a six days go-as-you-please match at San Francisco, the first horse accomplished five hundred and fifty-nine miles, beating the best man by nearly a hundred and eightyfive miles. In a latter contest of the same kind at Chicago, the tables were turned, the winner, Byrne, covering five hundred and seventy-eight miles in a hundred and fiftyone hours, against equine Betsy Baker's five hundred and sixty-eight; one of the horses retiring on the fourth day and dying a few hours afterwards. A more curious match still came off at Hendon: a well-known London swimmer giving a dog named "Now Then" half a minute's start in a half-mile swim, and being beaten by more than a hundred and fifty yards.

In July 1877, a carrier-pigeon tried conclusions with a railway-train. was a Belgian voyageur, bred at Woolwich, and "homed" to a house in Cannon Street, The train was the Continental mail-City. express, timed not to stop between Dover and Cannon Street Station. The pigeon, conveying an urgent message from the French police, was tossed through the railway-carriage window as the train moved from the Admiralty Pier; the wind being west, the atmosphere hazy, but the sun shining. For more than a minute the bird circled round till it attained an altitude of about half a mile, and then it sailed away Londonwards. By this time the engine had got full steam on, and the train was tearing away at the rate of sixty miles an hour; but the carrier was more than a match for it. Taking a line midway between Maidstone and Sittingbourne, it reached home twenty minutes before the express dashed into the station; the train having accomplished seventy-six and a half miles to the pigeon's

If pleasures that come unlooked for be trebly welcome, the sport-loving citizens of San Francisco must have enjoyed a comical bit of racing and chasing which came off in its streets not long since. An inquest was being held upon a murdered Chinaman, and a dispute arose as to whether the unfortunate subject of the enquiry had been shot or The coroner's officer was dispatched to the Morgue for the dead man's clothes, but returned without them, averring that the bundle had disappeared. He was told he must find it, his protestations of inability being cut short by the deputycoroner with: "Maybe the Chinamen carried it off with the body; follow the

corpse!"

The prompt command was promptly obeyed. Jumping into a buggy, the messenger made in hot haste for the defunct Chinaman's abode, only to find that the funeral train had departed. went in pursuit, at a pace calculated to provide the coroner with fresh subjects, and before long came up with the pro-"Passing fifteen carriages concession. taining mourners, the hearse, and a waggon, in which were seated a number of cat-gut scrapers, tom-tom strikers, and gongbeaters, he reached an express-waggon filled with roast-pig, tea, and other things considered essential to the welfare of departed Chinese spirits, and saw in it the missing apparel. To jump to the street, leap into the express-waggon, seize the bundle, return to his buggy, and drive off, was but the work of a moment. followed one of the strangest races ever witnessed. The entire funeral train turned, and started after the official, the pace of the horses quickened by the beating of gongs, and cries of 'Hi-yah!' from a hundred Chinese throats. The buggy was not to be caught, reaching the coroner's office two minutes ahead of the mourners; the messenger dropping the bundle at the coroner's feet just as the excited Chinamen, tumbling out of the carriages, 'made a move on the institution;' their leader crying, 'Him dead man no hap got him clothes; him no can go Chinee good place!' They were met by the keeper of the Morgue, armed with the sabre of his father, or of somebody else's father, and kept outside the door until that functionary made the leader comprehend that the bundle of clothes was required as evidence, whereupon the mourners were ordered back to their carriages, and the procession went on its errand again."

"I would give the whole stake to be half as calm as you are," said Sir Harry Vane Tempest to Buckle the jockey, when the latter assured him that he and Hambletonian would beat Diamond, and win the baronet the match and the thousands depending upon it. A man who stands to win or lose a fortune on the speed of his horse may be excused a little nervousness as to the result; still less is he to be reproached for feeling uneasy in his mind when his life depends upon his own fleetness of foot.

Apropos of the death of "old Mountjoy," the pedestrian, a correspondent of a London sporting newspaper related a story he heard from Mountjoy's own lips, a story so discreditable to one of the chief actors that it were to be wished the other laboured under a delusion. Hearing Lord W. boast that his bloodhounds would track any living thing, by scent alone, Colonel A. wagered a hundred guineas they would not track a man, and asked Mountjoy to win the wager for him, assuring the startled pedestrian there was no danger of the dogs catching him as they were slow runners, and he would take care sufficient start was allowed him; the object being simply to test their power of scent. The trial duly came off over three miles of ground round Hampstead Heath. After the dogs had sniffed at Mountjoy's legs, he made his way leisurely for half the course, when the flag was dropped, and the hounds set loose. They tracked their quarry splendidly, but were six hundred yards behind when Mountjoy reached the inn at the end of the course, and shut the door upon them, outside which they howled their dissatisfaction until removed by their keeper.

Disbelievers in the bloodhound's scent were still unconvinced, averring that they had sighted the man for part of the journey at least; and to settle the point beyond dispute, another match was made, to be run at night, the distance this time being but a mile and a half. Unsuspicious of foul play, Mountjoy went gaily on his way, but had not accomplished more than two-thirds of the distance allowed him by the conditions, when his hair stood on end, as the cry of the dogs, hot upon his trail, reached his ears. They had been purposely slipped before the proper time, without any warning. "For one second," said he, "I stood stock still, as if I had been frozen, and then dashed away and ran, as I had never done before, and have never done

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I was in perfect training and condition, but the cold sweat broke out from every pore, and poured down my body, while my legs seemed like lead, and I trembled all over. Still I kept desperately on, whilst nearer and nearer came the deep hoarse bay of the hounds, as the scent grew warmer, and they knew they were running up to their prey. I thought I was Those few seconds were like weeks, and I wondered whether they would grip me first by the leg, or fly straight at my throat. Luckily, I did not lose my head; and after the first mad burst I settled down and raced away at a pace which I knew would last the distance; but still closer and closer came the horrible cry, that sounded like my death-knell; and, in sheer desperation, I put on all the speed I could. At last I saw the lights of the lonely little inn, and my heart rose within me; but at that very instant the brutes broke out into a fierce savage yell, that told me that they had sighted me at last. There was a small garden in front of the house, and as I flew up to it I saw the gate was shut. How I did it I never knew; but, blown and exhausted with terror and the pace as I was, I cleared it, darted through the door, which fortunately stood open, and slamming it to, stood with my back against it. The lock had hardly closed, when bang! bang! against the panels came my terrible pursuers; and then they lay down and yelled savagely at finding themselves baulked of their prey."

As soon as he felt himself safe, rage took the place of fear; and seizing hold of a bottle, Mountjoy swore he would brain Lord W. if he entered the place; a threat he would have fulfilled, had not those present got him out of the room in time to prevent most justifiable homicide.

In May, 1878, an old man living alone some eight miles from Mariposa, California, was found dead in his mountain cabin, with a bullet-hole through his body. The cabindoor was barred, and a gun lay on the floor beside the corpse. Blood was found outside the house and in the garden; from which it was inferred that the old man had been shot while working in the garden, had crawled into the cabin, barred the door, and died clutching his rifle to defend himself. The officers upon whom it devolved to elucidate the mystery, were not long in coming upon the track of a horse, and the mark of a man's boot "having a turnedover heel and a broken shank." Near a ranche in the neighbourhood of Mariposa but one sowar flinched at the first jump,

they found the remains of a pair of boots, one of which was plainly answerable for the convicting impression. Further enquiry elicited that the cast-off foot-gear had belonged to Willie Ross, a young Indian herding horses for the owner of the ranche. He was forthwith arrested and put in prison to await trial; his guardians expecting a determined night-attack on the gaol by the Chowchilla Rangers, a society of ranchers instituted to suppress lawlessness by Judge Lynch's process.

Seven months afterwards Ross was tried for murder, found guilty, and sentenced by the jury to be imprisoned for life. Knowing that nothing short of death would satisfy the Rangers, Deputy-sheriff Choiser had two horses in waiting at the back of the court-house, and as soon as sentence was pronounced, hustled the Indian, securely ironed, upon the back of one, and springing upon the other himself, set out at full speed for Merced, forty miles distant, over a road six inches deep in

By the time two miles were covered, Mr. Choiser became aware other horses were upon the road, and when half-a-dozen pistol shots rang through the air, knew the dread Rangers were coming in pursuit, and that it was a race for life. The deputy and his charge flew over the frozen ground, and around the precipices, like the wind; scarcely passing one curve before their fifteen pursuers appeared from behind another, and sent a shower of bullets after the fugitives; but urge their horses as they might, they could not overtake them. When half-way to Merced, Mr. Choiser obtained fresh horses, and sped down the mountain track until the lynchers were hopelessly distanced, arriving at Merced safe and sound, with his prisoner; having accomplished forty miles, over a snow-covered rocky ground, in two hours and forty-five minutes.

Mr. Choiser was deserving of a better office than that of a Californian deputyshrievalty, although, having once started on his risky errand, he had no choice but to go on to the end, let what might befall. That was the predicament of the hero of a funny story from the camp in Afghanistan. The officers of a regiment marching to join the Khorum Valley force, at the first halt, got up a day's steeple-chasing; extemporising hedges, ditches, and hurdles, and mounting every native officer on something with four legs. A fair start was effected, d

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and only put his horse at it after a tremendous expenditure of whoops and sticks. Presently he was seen riding like a demon, taking every obstacle in splendid style, eventually passing the winning-post first, with his mouth wide open, his eyes starting from their sockets, his teeth chattering, capable only of groaning horribly in acknowledgment of the compliments showered When the reupon his horsemanship. mainder of the field came in, the brilliant performance was explained. Soon after clearing the first hurdle he came upon a brother sowar, who had been spilled, a sight that did not strengthen his nerves; and when the dismounted man's steed charged him with yawning mouth, in the desperation of terror the poor fellow plied his spurs vigorously, but could only keep just ahead of the riderless horse. Jump after jump the unhappy sowar took, with the open-mouthed pursuer close in his wake; and it was not until he had been hunted past the post that his mind was set at ease by the capture of his determined follower. Those who had lost money on the event consoled themselves with the reflection, that it was probably the first instance of a man winning a race through sheer apprehension of being swallowed by the horse of another competitor.

VISITED ON THE CHILDREN.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER XIV. A NAME FROM THE GRAVE.

"Down at Mickleham? Nonsense! He came back from there weeks ago. You must be mistaken."

"I don't think so, ma'am. I only heard from my sister yesterday, and it was she

who told me.

Mrs. Beverley turned round impatiently. She was sitting in front of her pier-glass, having her hair done, a book on her knee, and a dressing-gown all trimmed with costly lace wrapped round her. The sudden movement sent the volume on to the floor.

"And how can your sister know?

has she to do with Mr. Vane?'

"Please ma'am, she is school-room maid at the house where he is visiting, a Mrs. Jacobson's. It's just outside Mickleham."

"Mr. Jacobson's, you mean, I suppose, though he may have a wife for all I know. Why, that must be Matt Jacobson! Mr. Vane brought him here once or twice, a man with a lot of black curly hair and to take an interest in Mr. Vane's doings."

So-that is where he a lisp, a stockbroker.

She said the first words sharply, the last almost in a whisper, her head slightly bent, her dark pencilled brows contracted as if in thought; but the maid who was brushing out the masses of crisp blue-black hair, which fell in a dense curtain over her mistress's shoulders to the ground, took the remark as addressed to herself and answered it.

"Yes, ma'am. Polly says it's the third time he has been down since the beginning of last month. He was there little over a week ago; but only for a day and night; so perhaps you didn't know of it; and now he's there again. Polly don't think it's Mr. or Mrs. Jacobson he goes for though."

"What do you mean?"

Not at all as most mistresses would have answered a remark, which, coming from a servant, was a decidedly impertinent one, did Mrs. Beverley put the question, but with a mingled fierceness and curiosity unbridled as though the girl were her equal. Ladies of the Beverley stamp seldom go to the trouble of keeping up much reserve between themselves and their domestics.

"Well, ma'am, Polly says it's all for a young lady. Not that she's staying in the She lives over to Chadleigh End, four miles off; but every time Mr. Vane goes down he manages to see her; and he don't seem able to talk or think of nothink Mr. and Mrs. Jacobson, they chaff him about it at table quite open; but Polly says he don't seem to mind. He calls her his 'lily maid' hisself, and drinks her health.

"A precious 'lily,' I daresay! What is

she? Some farmer's daughter?"

"Oh! dear no, ma'am. Polly spoke of her just as if she were a real lady. She came riding over to lunch there one day, and Mr. Vane he took and fed her horse hisself, and waited on her at table just as if she were a queen. She's a sweet, fair young creature, Polly says, and-

"What's her name?" said Mrs. Beverley irritably. "Do you think I want to hear all Polly's nonsense? And don't pull my

hair so.

"If you would please not to jerk your head then, ma'am. Dysart is the name. She lives with her ma, the widow of an Eyetalian consul, so she calls herself."

"How did your Polly come to hear all this and write about it to you? She seems

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"No, ma'am, it's in the young lady. Polly's a Chadleigh girl herself and this is her first place from home, and of course she knows all the folks there."

"Then in that case you know them, too, as it's your home as well."

The girl coloured up and looked embarrassed.

"Yes, ma'am—no, ma'am," she said hesitatingly. "I mean I've been so many more years in service, ma'am, and always town service. I didn't like village life."

"But you go home on a visit sometimes,

I suppose." "Not for a good while back, ma'am; me and my people don't agree well. They didn't like my bettering myself; but I think I've heard of this Mrs. Dysart all the same.

She and her daughters live quite alone like. Nobody knows much about them." Mrs. Beverley laughed.

"Just the sort of girl Mr. Vane would amuse himself with flirting with when he had nothing to do. Don't waste your time and mine by talking of such folly. plait has taken you half an hour. haste with it."

But though the words sounded peremptory, Belle Beverley's tone had completely There was almost a complacent accent in it; and the face reflected in the mirror had lost its painful and anxious flush. After all, she was used to Gareth's flirtations. They were painful to her, of course, because she cared for him herself. But she knew they were a part of his nature, necessary to him as it were; and so long as they were only flirtations, and he drifted back to her when they were over, she tried not to mind them. Just now, for a moment, she had been stupidly frightened. She was afraid that this might be something more; but the maid's last words had reassured her. No, such a girl as this was not likely to entangle Gareth in any folly. The only thing which worried her was that he had been so silent about it.

And that worry grew. For the moment, for five minutes, even ten, perhaps, she fancied herself quite reassured and comforted; but the assurance could not have been complete or the comfort satisfactory, for neither availed to last her through the day. Nay, even when driving leisurely along the crowded Row, the demon of uncertainty and suspicion raised by her maid's gossip came back to her again and again, and each time with a more fiendish smile on its gibing lips, a

the park with its gay crowds and glittering toilets, gayer and more glittering than usual under the dazzling sunshine of a June morning, swam before her eyes like a mere phantasmal dream, and instead she seemed to see only a girl's figure, a "lily" face, and Gareth bending over it, "serving her as though she were a queen." Absurd, unlikely notion! But the vision stayed all the same. She could not drive it away; and when she thought of his repeated absences of late, and the way in which, even when she did see him, he avoided any confidential talk with her or mention of where he had been, her worry of mind increased to a perfect fever; and before the carriage had reached the end of the park a second time she gave the check-string a sudden pull, and told the coachman, "Home."

"This sort of thing will drive me mad," she said between her teeth. it's all nonsense, but how can one tell? I will go and see his sister to-morrow. Perhaps she knows."

It has been intimated already in this story that Mrs. Hamilton and her cousin Tom Beverley's widow were not on intimate Had the doctor's wife known the latter better it is probable that they might not have been even on visiting terms; Mrs. Hamilton being an upright woman, with severe notions on the subject of feminine reserve and decorum; but they lived so far apart, and in such widely different circles of society, that Gareth's sister really knew very little more of Mrs. Beverley than he chose to tell her; and, with all his faults, Gareth was still too much of a gentleman to malign a woman at whose house he was always a welcome guest.

Mrs. Hamilton knew that "Belle" was fond of her brother, and, knowing also that she was a rich and independent woman, she was not indisposed, for that brother's sake, to treat her with courtesy on the rare occasions when they happened to meet. It seemed to Mrs. Hamilton the proper thing that poor men should marry rich wives. Her husband had done so, and owed all his good fortune in life to it. Why should not Gareth do the same? Certainly Belle was not the woman she would have chosen for a sister; but, after all, what sort of woman was she in reality? Her very frankness and audacity made it difficult to tell, and gave her the air of exaggerating her own defects, and her wealth assisted the delusion. As a poor woman she would crueller curve of its barbed talons, till have been improper. As a rich woman she was simply eccentric. Mrs. Hamilton was far too severe a moralist to tolerate an improper person; but she had sufficient worldly prudence to make allowances for an eccentric one.

For these reasons she refrained from ordering her servant to say "Not at home," or from assuming more than her ordinary frigidity, when at about the most unorthodox hour for visiting in the twenty-four, somewhere about eleven in the morning, she received a message that Mrs. Beverley had called and was asking to see her.

The doctor's wife was seated in her morning-room at the time, engaged in the thoroughly proper and matronly task of knitting an under-vest for one of the younger children, while she heard her two elder girls read and recite their daily portion of Scripture; and she merely showed her sense of Mrs. Beverley's outrage on conventionality by the muttered words, "At this hour! What next?" and by declining to pretermit either of her occupations, until the visitor was actually in the room and extending a hand in greeting to

Probably Mrs. Beverley felt the hint thus conveyed, for she burst out into apologies as impetuous as her visit.

"Am I not a wretch to invade you at this hour? I wonder what you think of me for doing so. Something too horrid, I'm sure; but the fact is, I had to be in Surbiton this morning; and, as I said to myself, what's the good of being cousins if I can't run in and see Helen in a friendly way? I only wish you'd do the same by me."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Hamilton coldly; "but I am afraid that would be quite impossible. My morning duties always make calls before lunch out of the question. I have too much to do. Pray don't apologise for yourself, however."

"That is as much as saying I am interrupting those same duties. Fortunate creature to have any! I haven't, or anything to do, either. Don't you pity me?"

"Very much," said Mrs. Hamilton, with perfect sincerity; "if it were true. According to my creed, however, Isabelle, everyone has some duties to perform in the world. Yes, Annie, my dear," in answer to a mute appeal from the little girl still standing in front of her; "you and Ella may go for the present. Take your Bibles with you."

"There are two at any rate who won't quarrel with Cousin Belle's naughtiness and idleness if it gets them off a lesson," said Mrs. Beverley, detaining the child by the arm to give her a laughing kiss. "Give them a holiday, Helen, do. I don't often come; and I had no idea you taught them yourself."

"I do not, in general matters. Religious teaching, however, ought, I think, to be invariably the mother's province. No; I don't think a holiday from that would be desirable at any time, or that they would wish for it. Run away, now, my children. I will send for you later."

"Poor things, how implacable you are!" laughed Mrs. Beverley. "Kiss me first, then, Annie. Do you know you are very pretty, child. Your eyes are exactly the colour of Gareth's. Ella's are not; but then she's the image of her father—always was, weren't you, Ella? Bless me, child, you needn't blush and look so frightened. Papa's a very handsome man; you ought to be proud of resembling him."

Poor little Ella did not look proud. She simply blushed deeply, and cast an apprehensive glance at her mother. She was the eldest of the little Hamiltons, and knew in some mysterious way that to resemble papa was to displease mamma. She might have gathered it, perhaps, from the slight frown which had crossed the latter's brow at the words; but Mrs. Hamilton said nothing. She only pointed gently to the door, and the two children, early trained to prompt obedience, went away without a word.

"Now I am to be scolded!" said Mrs. Beverley, laughing. "But all the same, Annie is pretty, Helen; you can't deny it."

"I would rather she were not told so. Personal remarks are bad for children. Annie's foible is vanity already."

"It'll be a bigger foible by-and-by when those eyes have learnt how to do damage. Gareth might have been a saint but for his"

"A sanotity without much merit, I am afraid. How is Gareth, Isabelle? I suppose you have seen him later than I?"

"I haven't seen him for ages. He might be dead and buried for that matter; but I suppose he is devoting himself to this new flame of his, so I don't trouble my head with much anxiety about him. Do you know her, Helen? I hear she is rather pretty."

"Her? Who?" asked Mrs. Hamilton, opening her eyes.

She was beginning to gather the motive —incredible as it seemed to her prouder

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nature — of Mrs. Beverley's impromptu visit.

Mrs. Beverley burst into a hard little

"You don't mean to say you don't know about it?" she said. "Well, I know men won't always keep their sisters 'au fait' of their little flirtations; but as the damsel is a native of these parts, and lives not far— Why, Doctor, is that you? I thought you were never at home of a

morning. Mrs. Hamilton's sitting-room had two doors, one of which opened into the drawing-room. This was open at present, and through it Belle Beverley saw the doctor enter the outer room, and begin to rummage among some papers in a secretaire as if in search of something. He had certainly not come up for a chat with his wife, for he never even glanced at the inner doorway in full view of which she was sitting, and Mrs. Beverley's sudden exclamation made him start. She leaned forward and put out her hand to him, and he could not do otherwise than come and speak to her; but she was by no means a favourite of his, and even as he did so he took out his watch, glancing from it to the severely impassive face of his wife as though to intimate that his stay would not

be for long.

"No mere I am, after ten," he said, answering the widow's greeting with a pleasant smile. "I am only here now while they are getting the carriage out. I finished my morning round in town early to-day, and have to see a patient in Esher before lunch."

"Take me with you," said Mrs. Beverley audaciously. "I came by train, and would just as soon go back by Esher as not. It won't be against the proprieties, I suppose, Helen?"

Mrs. Hamilton's face had assumed a stony expression, and she did not vouch-safe a word. "But, unfortunately, I am not going anywhere near the station at Esher, and—don't think me very ungallant, Mrs. Beverley—I should be a wretchedly dull companion for you in any case; for I always read up my notes on the cases I am visiting on the way to them, and I was just looking out some on this when you spoke to me. Mrs. Hamilton will tell you that it is a habit with doctors, and a very necessary one."

His wife looked up with a keen angry flash in her eyes, a two-barbed one travelling from Belle Beverley to himself. "I do not know anything as to the necessity of your habits in general," she said with an accent of such freezing sarcasm that even her guest's sang froid was startled, "but if you have made this appointment to meet Isabelle Beverley, and drive her out to-day, she will probably expect you to dispense with the one you speak of while you are with her. I do not imagine that you are often—ungallant!"

Mrs. Beverley opened her eyes to their

"Appointment!" she repeated. "I had no appointment with Dr. Hamilton. What could put such an idea in your head? It was a sudden idea of my own that he might drive me to Esher; and I think he's awfully ungallant to refuse, especially after all the lifts I have given his brother-in-law. By the way, did you hear us talking of Gareth's last flirtation, Doctor? I was just asking your wife if she knew the girl."

"Which I do not," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"Which I do not," said Mrs. Hamilton.
"Gareth's friends are not often chosen from among my acquaintances; and probably would be the last I should care to include among them. Did you say, however, that this girl lives in Surbiton?"

"No, but in Surrey, within ten miles of you; and as I hear that he has paid three visits to her within the last three weeks, and is staying there now, I thought you would most likely know something about it. I suppose"—with a desperate affectation of carelessness which would not have deceived a kitten—"that there is no hope of its turning out anything serious: leading to matrimony, I mean."

"That depends on the person, I fancy," said Mrs. Hamilton, more gravely than "For my part I should be thankful to see him married to anyone in a good position and who would exert a good influence over him, and I am quite sure of one thing"-with an emphasis which might be intended to reassure her visitor— "that though Gareth may be foolish, there is no harm in him. He will only marry for love; and whatever he may have been as a bachelor he will be a good and faithful As to this new admiration, however, I have never even heard of it. Indeed, I fancy you know more of him and his doings than I do."

"Well, you see poor Tom and he were always like brothers," said Mrs. Beverley quickly: it was a speech she had made so often that I almost think she had got to believe in it herself—"but old friends get put on one side for new flirtations. I don't

suppose, however, that you would like this to prove anything serious, for from what I gathered the girl is of somewhat dubious extraction, daughter of the soi-disant widow of some Italian consul, a Miss Dysart and - Why! why! Doctor, take

care! Oh! what a pity!"

A pity, indeed! Dr. Hamilton, who during the above conversation had been putting his notes together in the outer room, had just come forward as Mrs. Beverley was speaking to bid her good-bye. Whether in doing so he trod on something and stumbled, or what caused the accident, those inside could not tell. All they saw was that the violent start he gave brought his elbow in contact with a pretty Indian vase which stood on a bracket near the door, and knocked it to the ground. The pieces were scattered all about, and the doctor's face went quite white with annovance.

"I-I beg your pardon," he exclaimed, turning to his wife. "I really am very sorry—very. How could I have been so awkward! Such a handsome vase, too! I hope we shall be able to match it."

"If I were Helen, I shouldn't care about breakages while I had a husband to make such pretty apologies for them," laughed Mrs. Beverley. "Why, Helen, he is nervous; his hands are shaking still, and he's as white as ashes. You ought to comfort him. Was it a unique specimen?"

"On the contrary, a very ordinary one," said Mrs. Hamilton, rising quietly to ring the bell for a maid to remove the fragments. She simply looked at her husband; and Mrs. Beverley, seeing the look, rose too, and said good-bye. Helen was always an enigma to her, and at present her ungracious ignoring of the doctor's regret for the accident, and the look of more than concern on his face, seemed to her like forewarnings of a domestic storm.

"In which I should be sure to take his part, and make Helen furious with me," she said to herself. "What's a bit of china, more or less? But I believe she has a fearful temper; and, after all, as she knows nothing whatever about the girl, I

may as well go home."

The doctor went with her to the gate, his momentary discomposure over, and his face wearing its pleasantest smile again.

"If you walked from the station, you must go back to it in my carriage," he said cordially. "It is ready, I see, and I am not, so it won't in the least delay me; and give our love to Gareth when you see him. I suppose this—a—new love of his is a Londoner, as you know about her?"

"Oh, no; didn't you hear me telling Helen she lives at Chadleigh End?"

"Chadleigh-where ?"

"Chadleigh End, near Mickleham; you

know. He is staying there."

"Chadleigh End? Oh, ah! quite a small village, isn't it? Any gentry there ought to be well known to the rest. And I think you said the name was-

"Dysart; so my maid tells me at least. She's the one that I took after your wife parted with her, you know; but she is a Chadleigh girl by birth, and knows all about these people."

"Ah, yes!" said the doctor; "and here's

the carriage; let me put you in. Is this your parasol? Good-bye. Such a pleasure to have seen you." He stood with his hat off, smiling still, as the carriage rolled away, and then turned back into the garden. A great change had come over his face in that moment. It wore the same look it had done when he broke the china: a pained, anxious, almost livid pallor, which gave him the appearance of being twenty years older than he was; and his fingers shook again, as drawing out his note-book, he wrote down in it the words "Chadleigh End," adding after a moment's thought, "Tuesday."

"Not that I am likely to forget it," he said to himself half aloud. "What does it mean? Dead all these years, dead—thank

God! and now for Gareth-

A burst of baby-laughter, and two small mischievous beings, his youngest children, came skipping through the laurels one in pursuit of another. There was a pause, and a shy up-glancing in surprise at the sight of papa, so seldom at home; but Dr. Hamilton held out both hands encouragingly, his brow cleared as if by magic, and his face bright with fatherly tenderness.

"Well, you monkeys, what are you up to?" he said gaily. "Come here, Dollie, my wee woman, and give papa a kiss, the biggest you've got in that nice little mouth."

Little Dollie came forward willingly enough; pouting out her red lips in pre-paration; but the kiss was not given. Her mother's hand on her shoulder detained her. Mrs. Hamilton must have been close behind her husband, though he had not seen her, and her sudden appearance startled him as much as it did the children. "Dolly, Fred, how come you in the front

garden?" she said with grave reproach.
"Do you not know that it is forbidden?
And no hats on either in this sun! Come indoors and get them."

She took a child by either hand, and walked slowly towards the house with them. The doctor made no remonstrance. If he had been going to do so, the one look he encountered from her eyes must have quelled his purpose. Only there was a good deal of bitterness mingled with the wonted melancholy in his own, as he left the garden to resume his interrupted duties.

Little Dollie, however, was not quite so placable. Her lips remained pouted out, though with the reverse of kissing intentions, and as they entered the house she ventured on a rebellious murmur:

"Papa was doin' to pay wis Dollie. Her would lite to pay wis her papa, her would."

"Papa has his work to attend to. He has no time to play with little girls," said Mrs. Hamilton gravely. "Can't my Dolly play with someone else?"

The little face was lifted eagerly.

"Wis oo, mammy? Will oo pay wis Fwed an' me? Oh, do, do!"

But Mrs. Hamilton, instead of answering, almost tore her hand from the dimpled coaxing fingers, and pushed the child from her.

"Take her away, Fred," she said hoarsely. "Go—both of you to the play-room. Nurse will amuse you. She—is the proper person."

Poor little Hamiltons! Dragged away from the kind smiling papa, who would

have welcomed them, and driven away by the graver, colder-mannered mamma, they trotted soberly down the long corridor hand in hand, with wistful eyes and depressed corners to their mouths, and a general sense of guilt and injury on them. Dolly was still the refractory one.

"Papas has time to pay wis childwen," she muttered stubbornly. "Minnie Taylor's

papa pays wis her."

"Our papas and mammas is different from uvver peoples," said Fred with sobriety. He was used to the difference, and accepted it uncomplainingly; but it oppressed him all the same. The little Hamiltons were not happy children.

And, meanwhile, their mother, behind the door which she had closed upon them, was fighting dumbly with another of those terrible paroxysms of pain by which we have once before seen her overcome.

"But, thank God, I had strength to get rid of them first," she moaned, the big drops of torture standing on her brow. "Poor lambs! they will think me cruel; but better that than that they should be haunted by the sight of me so."

END OF BOOK I.

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